

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1 -- 13. (canceled)

1 14. (currently amended) An apparatus for aligning a
2 stack of flexible sheets on a substrate having an outer edge ~~some~~
3 ~~of the sheets and having a portion~~ projecting laterally past one of
4 the edges, the apparatus comprising:

5 an aligning stabilizing element shiftable horizontally
6 toward and away from the one edge of the substrate and having a
7 face directed toward the ~~sheets stack~~;

8 a slip-preventing layer on the face; and

9 means for shifting the aligning element horizontally
10 toward the stack and substrate for engaging the projecting ~~sheets~~
11 portion of the stack and pushing same inward on the substrate to a
12 position lying on or inward of the outer edge without downwardly
13 bending or deflecting the sheets.

1 15. (previously presented) The apparatus defined in
2 claim 14 wherein the layer is resilient.

1 16. (currently amended) The apparatus defined in claim
2 [[14]] 15 wherein the layer is made of an elastomer.

1 17. (previously presented) The apparatus defined in
2 claim 14 wherein the element has an upper part and a lower part.

1 18. (previously presented) The apparatus defined in
2 claim 17 wherein the upper and lower part are joined together at a
3 nonplanar interface.

1 19. (currently amended) An apparatus for aligning a
2 stack of flexible sheets on a substrate having an outer edge, ~~some~~
3 ~~of the sheets~~ a portion of the stack projecting laterally past one
4 of the edges, the apparatus comprising:

5 an aligning stabilizing element shiftable horizontally
6 toward and away from the one edge of the substrate;

7 a member on the aligning element engageable under the
8 stack; and

9 means for shifting the aligning element horizontally
10 toward the stack and fitting the member under the projecting sheets
11 portion to support same while and pushing the projecting sheets
12 inward on the substrate to a position lying on or inward of the
13 outer edge without downwardly bending or deflecting the sheets.

1 20. (previously presented) The apparatus defined in
2 claim 19 wherein the element has a horizontal surface portion
3 generally level with an upper surface of the substrate.

4 21. (currently amended) A method of aligning a stack of
5 flexible sheets on a substrate having an outer edge, ~~some of the~~
6 ~~sheets a portion of the stack~~ projecting laterally past one of the
7 edges, the method comprising the step of:

8 pressing a nonslip surface of an aligning stabilizing
9 element against the laterally projecting sheets portion so as to
10 push the laterally projecting sheets portion in at least to the
11 outer edge without downward bending the sheets while pushing the
12 [[m]] portion in ; ~~and thereafter pressing the stabilizing element~~
13 ~~against the other sheets in the stack to align them on the~~
14 ~~substrate.~~

1 22. (currently amended) The method defined in claim 21,
2 further comprising the step before pressing the stabilizing element
3 against the laterally projecting sheets portion of:

4 aligning the substrate relative to the stabilizing
5 element.

1 23. (previously presented) The method defined in claim
2 21, further comprising the step of

3 reducing friction between a lowermost sheet of the stack
4 and a support surface of the substrate on which it rests.

1 24. (previously presented) The method defined in claim
2 23 wherein friction is reduced by providing a low-friction foil
3 between the lowermost sheet and the upper surface.

1 25. (previously presented) The method defined in claim
2 23 wherein friction is reduced by coating the upper surface with a
3 lubricant.

1 26. (currently amended) A method of aligning a stack of
2 flexible sheets on a substrate having an outer edge, ~~some of the~~
3 ~~sheets a portion of the stack~~ projecting laterally past one of the
4 edges, the method comprising the step of:

5 engaging a support ~~surface member~~ member of an aligning
6 ~~stabilizing~~ element underneath the laterally projecting ~~sheets~~
7 portion and pushing the ~~stabilizing~~ aligning element and the
8 laterally projecting ~~sheets~~ portion in at least to the outer edge
9 without downwardly bending the laterally projecting sheets ~~and~~
10 ~~thereafter pressing the stabilizing element against the other~~
11 ~~sheets in the stack to align them on the substrate.~~